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5 January 1962

Summary of AN APPRAISAL OF SOVIET INTENTIONS

1. Foreign Policy. Nothing in the XXII Congress at Moscow last October, or in Soviet behavior since, suggests any change in the broad lines of the USSR's foreign policy. Khrushchev has reaffirmed, and is vigorously pursuing, the strategy of "peaceful coexistence" aimed at defeating the West without war. As part and parcel of this policy, he is continuing to build Soviet military strength in order to increase the USSR's political weight in the world and to prosecute general war as effectively as possible should deterrence fail.

2. Domestic Affairs. The Congress revealed, however, that domestic Soviet politics is a lively and contentious business. Khrushchev does not, we believe, have to fear for his position. But he does have to maneuver among colleagues who are less than equal to him but more than the terrorized lackeys who surrounded Stalin. These colleagues share Khrushchev's general outlook, but they have succeeded in limiting the revisions which he wished to make in economic priorities (greater benefits for the consumer) and military policy (downgrading of conventional forces and traditional doctrine).

3. In attacking Stalin, Khrushchev was seeking to discredit all views other than his own, not only among his colleagues, but also in the party

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apparatus at large. The hierarchy of professional party workers is of a conservative cast and tends to be suspicious of Khrushchev's innovations. The anti-Stalin campaign was meant to break their emotional attachment to their old mentor, while the concurrent attack on Molotov et al was intended to warn them of the penalties of failing to adjust to the Khrushchev era.

4. The confusion created by this maneuver among Communists, both in the USSR and abroad, is probably temporary. In the long run, however, the anti-Stalin campaign is likely gradually to weaken the propositions on which Soviet party rule is based.

5. Sino Relations. Of much more immediate interest and import is the renewed Soviet attack, primarily via Albania, on Chinese pretensions to international leadership. Peiping has once again rejected the demand that it acknowledge Soviet authority; it continues to uphold Albania, to lobby openly against Soviet positions in international front gatherings, and to maneuver for support among other parties. Neither side evinces a willingness to compromise, and each appears prepared to contemplate an open split.

6. In following the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations, we have generally felt it unlikely that matters would proceed to the point of a public disavowal of the myth of unity. Such a break would almost inevitably be followed by open recriminations, dual claims to the possession of doctrinal truth, and calls for the overthrow of the competing leadership. Communists everywhere would be pressed to declare themselves; purges and splits would

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probably occur in many parties; some, especially those in Asia, might eventually align themselves with the Chinese. The Sino-Soviet military alliance would become inoperative. This kind of break would have a profound effect upon Soviet views of the world and their prospects in it. Conceivably it might lead, in the long run, to more normal relations with the West.

7. Nevertheless, our present reading of the evidence persuades us that the chances of such an open break during the next year or so have increased very substantially -- perhaps the odds are now about even. Even if a break is avoided, we believe that it will remain in the foreground as a continuing possibility, and that Sino-Soviet relations will be an uneasy and distrustful truce, marked by cooperation at various times and places and by competition at others.

From
John A. Lewis

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